

# The Story of Broadwell

*A Community Through Time*

**A history written in the shape of the village**

Broadwell is not simply a collection of old buildings. Its story lies in the relationship between springs and streams, church and manor, farmsteads and cottages, the Green, lanes, open land and the people who have made a life here. <sup>1,2,5,9</sup>

ABOUT THIS DRAFT

# A living history, not the last word

This review draft brings together the Victoria County History, Gloucestershire's Historic Environment Record, official building descriptions, Pevsner's architectural account, Joan Johnson's 1999 village history, the St Paul's church leaflet, the newly recovered Leigh/Thursby typescript, the 1993 Village Appraisal, the 2026 Community Survey and knowledge shared by residents. It is intended to be readable now and capable of becoming richer as new records, photographs and memories are found. <sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11</sup>

The approach is simple: speak plainly where the documentary record is strong; identify interpretation where sources need to be read together; and preserve local memory without presenting every remembered detail as independently proved. That is not a dismissal of oral history. It is a way of keeping the shared record trustworthy while still leaving room for people to add to it. <sup>1,2,5,10,11</sup>

A newly recovered 27-page typescript adds a further layer. Its preface says that the historical notes were the result of a serious study by Roger Leigh, while D. N. Thursby took responsibility for the later section he called the 'Old Wives' Tales', assembled from village memories. This draft uses the first part as a local secondary source to be checked against formal records, and the later part as attributed oral history rather than proof of every detail. <sup>11</sup>

## How the evidence is used

|                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Documented record</b><br>County history, archaeological records, listed-building descriptions, maps, surveys and dated parish material. These sources support the firm chronological framework. | Local history and living memory<br>Joan Johnson's booklet, the Leigh/Thursby typescript, the church leaflet, place-names, speech, family knowledge and first-person recollection. These add texture, preserve voices and point towards records still to be found. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Broadwell, spoken locally**  
Long-standing residents of The Cotswolds sometimes refer to Broadwell as “Bradall” or “Brad’l”. The spelling here is phonetic because the sound matters more than a formal written version. It is a small but valuable piece of living history: the village carried in local speech. <sup>10</sup>

Scope. This is a history of the settlement, its buildings, water, fields and community. The separately commissioned Broadwell Parish Greenspaces Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, updated 26 August 2026, assesses habitats and the potential for protected and notable species at four identified greenspaces. The two pieces of work complement one another without being merged. <sup>9,12</sup>

HOW THE STORY IS ORGANISED

# Reading Broadwell through place, time and memory

The chapters move from landform and early archaeology to abbey estate, church, manor, buildings, farming and village life. The final sections connect this long history with the two modern community surveys and with the oral history still waiting to be recorded.

|                                       |                                     |
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| 1. What makes Broadwell Broadwell     | 9. Farms, fields and inclosure      |
| 2. Water and landform                 | 10. Work, trades, inns and the mill |
| 3. A local historian's map            | 11. The Green, stream and lanes     |
| 4. Before the written village         | 12. Nineteenth-century change       |
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**The purpose of the work**

The aim is not to freeze Broadwell in time. It is to understand the pattern of water, land, buildings, work and community that has allowed the village to change while remaining recognisably Broadwell - or, in an older local voice, Bradall. <sup>1,5,8,9,10</sup>

This remains a review draft rather than a finished illustrated history. The newly recovered Leigh/Thursby typescript has been incorporated where it adds evidence, context or character. Material that cannot yet be corroborated is identified as remembered tradition or reserved for later checking, so that the document can grow without losing its evidential discipline. <sup>11</sup>

What makes Broadwell Broadwell

Broadwell is often first encountered as a beautiful Cotswold village, but beauty alone does not explain it. Its distinctiveness comes from older layers remaining visible together: water rising through the ground, stone buildings gathered without losing contact with open land, a church and manor at the historic core, farms and barns within the settlement, and lanes and paths that still lead quickly into fields and the Evenlode landscape.<sup>1,4,5</sup>

The village has changed repeatedly. Ownership altered after the Dissolution. The common landscape was reorganised by inclosure. New houses arrived in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Electricity, mains water, the village hall and changing patterns of work altered everyday life. Yet Broadwell can still be read as a place shaped by water, farming, stone, church, manor and open ground.<sup>1,5</sup>

**In short**

Broadwell's historic character depends not only on individual buildings, but on the relationship between buildings, green space, water, lanes, farmsteads and surrounding countryside.<sup>1,4,9</sup>

Broadwell in layers

|                                                                      |                                                       |                                                           |                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Neolithic</b><br>Polished axehead found beside the village stream | <b>Roman</b><br>Villa north-west of the historic core | <b>Anglo-Saxon</b><br>Burials recorded near the Fosse Way | <b>708</b><br>Early grant claimed by Evesham Abbey           |
| <b>1086</b><br>Broadwell manor in Domesday                           | <b>c. 1200</b><br>Abbot's house, later a grange       | <b>1545</b><br>Former abbey manor sold by the Crown       | <b>1619-21</b><br>Manor bought and divided                   |
| <b>1793</b><br>Inclosure reshapes land and roads                     | <b>1851-94</b><br>School built, rebuilt and enlarged  | <b>1953-57</b><br>Mains water and present village hall    | <b>1993-2026</b><br>Two surveys record continuity and change |

The 2026 survey reaches a closely related conclusion from present-day experience. Residents repeatedly linked the Green, St Paul's, the Manor House, Broadwell Farm and Cotswold stone buildings with surrounding fields, Watery Lane, the stream, long views, wildlife, dark skies and community life.<sup>9</sup>

*“The relationship between the surrounding countryside and the scale of the historic Cotswold stone buildings and walls. The spaces between are as important.”<sup>9</sup>*

*Anonymous response to the 2026 Broadwell Community Survey*

# A village below the hill and beside the springs

Broadwell sits where the land falls away from the high ridge and Fosse Way and begins to flatten towards the Evenlode. The eastern half of the old parish lies at roughly 400 feet, while the western side rises sharply to more than 750 feet. The village itself lies just below the 500-foot level at the foot of the hill from Stow.<sup>1</sup>

That position is central to the story. Springs rise from the Middle Lias, and the Caudwell, Mill and Allis brooks cross the parish towards the River Evenlode. Near the largest spring stand the church, manor and historic home farm. Below them, water runs through the former Green and into the lower ground. The name Broadwell is thought to refer to this broad spring or well.<sup>1</sup>

### Higher ground

Stone-brash, limestone outcrops and the ridge towards the Fosse Way. Historically, most of the arable lay on the higher ground.<sup>1</sup>

### Lower ground

Heavy clay, alluvium, springs, brooks and meadows towards the Evenlode, which has long flooded in winter.<sup>1</sup>

## Water as structure, not decoration

The stream and ford are picturesque, but their importance is deeper. Water helps explain why Broadwell formed where it did, why the church and manor occupy the upper end, why routes cross where they do, and why some low-lying ground has remained open or wet. It also connects the historical story with current concerns about drainage, surface water and flooding.<sup>1,9</sup>

The pattern is visible in small details. The road from the Green towards the church historically forded the Mill Brook. A medieval mill and fishpond lay downstream. Water was piped from the spring near the church until a mains supply reached the village in 1953. The Manor House still contains a well in its vaulted cellars.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Joan Johnson’s local history describes additional springs and wells within the village and recalls disputes over water between Broadwell and Stow. Her account is especially valuable for showing that water was not merely a natural feature: it was a shared resource, a source of work and sometimes a cause of argument.<sup>5</sup>

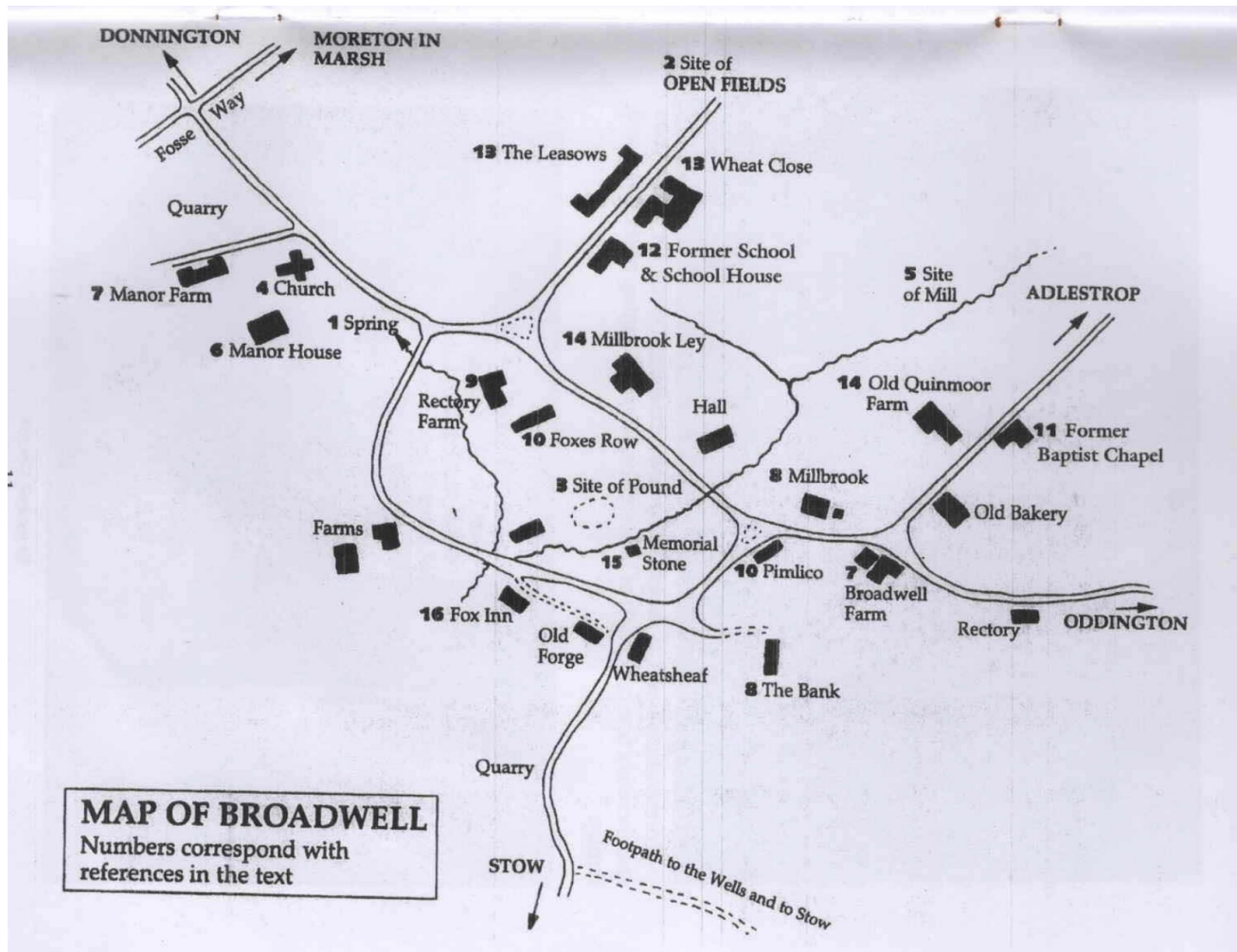
### Continuity in the landscape

The same water system that helps explain the village’s location and historic economy also shapes modern experience of wet ground, drainage, sewerage and flood risk.<sup>1,5,9</sup>



Broadwell Ford in the early twentieth century. Reproduced from Joan Johnson, *A Short History of Broadwell*.

## Broadwell as mapped in Joan Johnson's local history



Historical map reproduced from Joan Johnson, *A Short History of Broadwell*. The numbered places correspond with references in that publication. It is not a current planning, boundary or definitive topographical map.

The source publication credits its in-text illustrations to Felicity A. Hill.

## A Neolithic find, a Roman villa and Anglo-Saxon burials

Broadwell's written record becomes much clearer in the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods, but the wider landscape contains firm evidence of earlier human activity. The evidence does not prove an unbroken settlement occupying exactly the same footprint for thousands of years. It shows repeated use of a favourable landscape close to water, routes and workable land.<sup>2</sup>

### The polished stone axehead

A polished Neolithic stone axehead was found in 1984 by Mr Savery in the garden of The Gables, close to the surface and about five metres from the stream. The Historic Environment Record describes it as virtually complete, 94.5 mm long and polished all over. No petrological analysis was undertaken, so its geological source remains uncertain.<sup>2</sup>

The axehead is therefore no longer simply a local story awaiting verification. It is a documented archaeological find. What it cannot tell us on its own is whether people lived permanently on the site of the later village or whether the object was lost, deposited or brought there at another time.<sup>2</sup>

### The Roman villa

The Roman villa north-west of the church is a scheduled site. Finds were recovered when a field was dug in 1913, and D. T. Rice partly excavated two rooms in 1923. Both rooms had tiled floors and produced red and white wall plaster, blue and white limestone tesserae, tiles and pottery. Later fieldwork confirmed a surface scatter of Roman pottery dating broadly from the second to the fourth centuries.<sup>2</sup>

This is substantial evidence of a well-appointed Roman building in Broadwell's landscape. Suggestions that the site may have had a wider roadside function remain interpretation rather than settled fact, so the public story should be confident about the villa while cautious about its exact character and extent.<sup>2</sup>

### Anglo-Saxon burial evidence

The HER also records at least three Anglo-Saxon burials in the wider Broadwell area near the Fosse Way. Two contracted female burials found around 1926 were accompanied by a spiral-headed bronze pin and an iron knife. Another burial, discovered by or before 1877, was associated with a spearhead and small buckle. These finds show early-medieval use of the landscape, though not necessarily the exact form of the later village core.<sup>2</sup>

### A responsible conclusion

Broadwell's landscape contains documented Neolithic, Roman and Anglo-Saxon evidence. The evidence is strong enough to tell, but not strong enough to claim a simple, continuous line of settlement from one period to the next.<sup>2</sup>

# Broadwell and Evesham Abbey

Evesham Abbey later claimed that King Coenred gave Broadwell to the monastery in 708. The Victoria County History treats that claim carefully: if it was correct, the abbey must later have lost the estate, because around 1034 it was “redeemed” from Cnut for the abbey by Aelfweard, Bishop of London. The safest account is therefore that Broadwell was associated with Evesham in the early medieval period, while the precise eighth-century sequence remains an abbey claim rather than an uncontested fact.<sup>1</sup>

## Broadwell in Domesday

By 1086 the position is firm. Evesham Abbey held Broadwell manor, including Donnington and properties elsewhere. Domesday enumerated 48 people: a priest, a free man, 25 villagers, eight smallholders and 13 enslaved people. Domesday is not a modern population census, but the entry demonstrates an organised landed estate with arable farming, tenants, labour obligations and an ecclesiastical presence.<sup>1</sup>

|                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>People recorded in 1086</b></p> <p>1 priest, 1 free man, 25 villagers, 8 smallholders and 13 enslaved people: 48 people in the Domesday categories.<sup>1</sup></p> | <p><b>What the entry means</b></p> <p>The figures should not be converted into a precise modern population total. Their value lies in showing the structure of an estate and its dependent community.<sup>1</sup></p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## A working medieval estate

In the early thirteenth century the manor owed the abbey kitchen 900 eggs, 12 cooking pots and 3d rent each year. Such details turn an abstract estate into a working landscape of food, labour, rents and obligations. The abbey also exercised manorial government and claimed rights over bread and ale.<sup>1</sup>

Around 1200 Abbot Roger Norreys built a “noble house” at Broadwell and retired there in 1202. The building burned about twenty years later and was replaced by a grange, rebuilt or enlarged around 1300. The medieval centre was therefore not only administrative: it contained substantial buildings, farming operations and a close relationship between abbey, manor and church.<sup>1</sup>

Broadwell already had a priest in 1086, and Adlestrop church was probably founded from Broadwell as a chapel of ease. The manorial and ecclesiastical landscape extended beyond the modern parish boundary into Stow, Donnington and Mangersbury.<sup>1</sup>



## St Paul's: stone, memory and a living landmark

At the upper end of Broadwell, close to the largest spring, St Paul's Church, the Manor House and the historic home farm form the strongest physical concentration of the village's long history. Their position is as important as their architecture: water, worship, landholding and farming meet in one place.<sup>1</sup>

### A church assembled over centuries

St Paul's is Grade II\* listed. Twelfth-century fabric survives in the chancel and nave; the chancel arch and south arcade are early thirteenth century; fourteenth-century windows and the fifteenth-century west tower add later medieval layers. The seventeenth-century porch, nineteenth-century restoration and later fittings show continuing use rather than a building frozen in one period.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

One carved fragment in the porch has been described as probably Saxon by Pevsner and as Saxo-Norman in the official listing. Together with the Domesday record of a priest, it suggests an early ecclesiastical presence, but it does not by itself establish the complete form or date of a pre-Conquest church.<sup>1,3,4</sup>

### Monuments as a village archive

The church and churchyard hold a dense social record. The principal monuments include the alabaster group to Herbert Weston, his wife and child; the classical monument to Robert Hunckes; memorials to the Hodges family; and an exceptional group of early seventeenth-century bale tombs, often described locally as wool-bale or woolpack tombs, several associated with the Chadwell family. Parish registers survive from 1539, though with gaps.<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

### The ancient yew

The churchyard yew is one of Broadwell's most remarkable living features. An undated church leaflet records that the Conservation Foundation certified the specimen on the south side of the church as 1,300 years old, and Joan Johnson's history repeats that estimate. Other local estimates have been higher. Ancient yews are exceptionally difficult to date precisely, especially once trunks become hollow and renew themselves through layered growth.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

The responsible conclusion is therefore not a false precision but a strong one: the tree is of exceptional antiquity and may substantially predate the surviving medieval fabric of St Paul's. It cannot prove an earlier sacred site by itself, but it makes the churchyard a place of extraordinary continuity.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

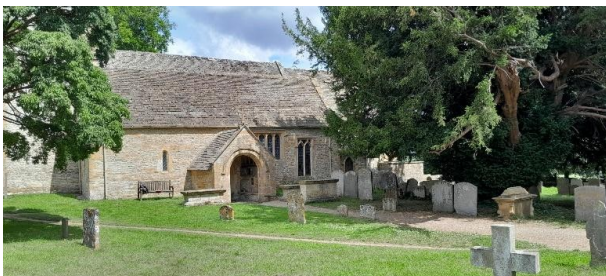
### A church remembered in use

The typescript preserves a first-person account by a curate who arrived in 1889. He recalled beginning with Sunday school and a well-attended afternoon service, the reading desk and lectern standing together, lessons read from the chancel, and the church lit first by candles and later by lamps. Such details turn architectural change into an account of worship as it was experienced.<sup>11</sup>

The same account remembered a three-decker pulpit, a gallery, open seating and strong local arguments over the alterations of the 1860s. Not every detail has been independently verified, but the recollection is valuable because it records how the building was used, heard and contested, as well as how it looked.<sup>11</sup>

#### An archive of stone and living wood

The church preserves architecture, monuments, registers and local memory. The yew adds a living feature whose age reaches beyond the surviving building and across many generations of village life.<sup>1,3,5,6,7</sup>



*St Paul's and the churchyard yew, photographed for the 2026 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.*



*St Paul's in Joan Johnson's local history, published in 1999.*

# After the Dissolution: from manor to freeholders

The Dissolution ended Evesham Abbey’s centuries of ownership. In 1545 the Crown sold the manor to Richard Andrews. It passed through the Baskerville and Talbot families before Anthony Hodges and William Chadwell bought what remained in 1619 and divided it in 1621. Through sales and subdivisions, the old manorial estate broke into a number of smaller freeholds.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

By about 1700 Broadwell could be described in two apparently contradictory ways: nobody was certain who was lord of the manor, and there was “no lord of the manor, but all freeholders”. The phrase captures a significant change. Authority and landholding had become dispersed among comparatively prosperous farmers and landowners.<sup>1</sup>

## The Manor House

The Manor House is Grade II\* listed. It retains seventeenth-century fabric and was rebuilt in 1757 by Mary Chamberlayne and her husband Dr Thomas Chamberlayne after a fire. Its formal ashlar front, slate roof, five-bay composition and central pediment distinguish it from the rubble-built farmhouses and cottages nearby, while older work survives behind. The listed description records a well within the vaulted cellars.<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

The history of the house is inseparable from the history of the divided manor. Hodges family ownership, Chamberlayne rebuilding and later Leigh associations all connect landholding with the church, farms and wider village landscape.<sup>1,3,5</sup>

## National events at the village edge

Broadwell was not a centre of national conflict, but the Civil War came close. In 1646 a parliamentary force came up on the rear of royalist troops between Donnington and Stow. Joan Johnson’s account adds local names and traditions connected with the conflict, reminding us that national events were experienced through roads, households and loyalties in the surrounding countryside.<sup>1,5</sup>

### A dispersed village of substantial places

The break-up of the manor helps explain why Broadwell contains several important houses, farms and barns rather than one all-dominating estate complex. The history of ownership is visible in the settlement pattern.<sup>1,4</sup>

|                                                     |                                                 |                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1545</b><br>Former abbey manor sold by the Crown | <b>1552</b><br>Passed to Sir Thomas Baskerville | <b>1619</b><br>Bought by Hodges and Chadwell                |
| <b>1621</b><br>The remaining manor divided          | <b>1757</b><br>Manor House rebuilt              | <b>1793</b><br>Remaining manorial rights ended at inclosure |

# A village of stone, barns and varied scale

Cotswold limestone gives Broadwell visual unity, but the village is not architecturally uniform. Its buildings range from the medieval church and formal eighteenth-century Manor House to rubble-built farmhouses, cottages in singles, pairs and short rows, large agricultural barns, former workshops and later houses using traditional materials.<sup>1,3,4</sup>

Pevsner captures this contrast neatly: the farmhouses, barns and cottages are mostly grey rubble, while the Manor House is built of warmer ashlar. The result is harmony without sameness. Materials recur, but age, use, scale and form remain legible.<sup>4</sup>

| Building or group                                    | What it contributes                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| St Paul's Church                                     | The medieval and ecclesiastical anchor; worship, monuments, registers and the ancient yew.                                               |
| The Manor House                                      | The manorial story, seventeenth-century fabric and formal rebuilding of 1757.                                                            |
| Millbrook and The Bank                               | Substantial seventeenth-century domestic buildings in the traditional Cotswold manner.                                                   |
| Broadwell Hill                                       | A large 1879 house for Piers Thursby, designed by Ewan Christian in a Jacobean manner; distinct from the older Broadwell Hill Farmhouse. |
| Broadwell Hill Farmhouse                             | An older farmhouse with mullioned and transomed windows, dating broadly from the seventeenth century or around 1700.                     |
| Temple Farm and Quinmoor                             | Smaller historic farmhouses whose mullioned windows and arched doorways contribute to the east end of the village.                       |
| Broadwell Farm, Red Hills Farm and other farm groups | Barns, yards and the direct relationship between settlement and farmland.                                                                |
| Cottages and former service buildings                | The everyday texture of the village and evidence of trades, households and incremental change.                                           |

## Barns are part of the history, not background

The Victoria County History singled out the number of large stone barns as a feature of Broadwell. They carry the history of work into the centre of the settlement and prevent the historic environment from being understood only as a collection of genteel houses and landmarks.<sup>1</sup>

### Harmony without sameness

The most convincing additions are likely to be those that understand scale, spacing, orientation, materials and landscape setting rather than merely copying historic details.<sup>1,4,9</sup>

# Farms, fields, orchards and inclosure

Broadwell's history is inseparable from farming. Domesday evidence suggests an expansion of arable land in the late eleventh century. Later records show a mixed landscape of open-field strips, pasture, meadow, orchards and common rights. The heavy lower ground may have favoured dairying, while the higher ground carried much of the arable. In 1627 there were even tobacco plantations in Broadwell. <sup>1</sup>

## Inclosure before and after 1793

Some land had already been enclosed piecemeal before the formal award. The 1793 inclosure affected 1,203 acres, reorganised ownership and access, set out roads and exchanged common rights for allotted land. In the short term more land went under crops; sheep and beef production increased, while butter and cheese production fell. <sup>1</sup>

Inclosure did not erase every trace of the earlier landscape. Ridge and furrow, surviving tracks, old pasture, meadows, hedges and field boundaries continue to show how land was used and reorganised. The Historic Environment Record maps substantial areas of medieval ridge and furrow around the village and across the parish. <sup>1,2</sup>

## Field names and the memory of the old landscape

The Leigh/Thursby typescript attempts to reconstruct the pre-inclosure pattern of strips, balks, droveways and field names from older maps and local knowledge. Its precise reconstruction should be tested against the 1793 award and later mapping, but it reinforces a central point: present lanes, hedges, gaps and ridges are surviving evidence of a working landscape, not accidental leftovers. <sup>11</sup>

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The fields as evidence</b><br>Ridge and furrow, hedges, tracks, old pasture and field boundaries deserve to be mapped alongside buildings. They are the surviving texture of the farmed landscape. <sup>1,2</sup> | <b>The village as a farmed place</b><br>Farm courts, barns, paddocks, orchards and grazing spaces within the settlement are not leftover gaps. They are part of the internal structure of a working village. <sup>1,4,9</sup> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Fewer working farms, a continuing landscape

Substantial farming remained a striking feature into the twentieth century. The historical account records 10 farms in 1870, eight in 1919, 11 in 1939 and nine in 1960. By 1993 the Village Appraisal described only three or four working farms. The numbers changed, but fields, farm buildings and agricultural movement continued to shape the place. <sup>1,8</sup>

|                                     |                        |                         |                        |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>1870</b><br>10 substantial farms | <b>1919</b><br>8 farms | <b>1939</b><br>11 farms | <b>1960</b><br>9 farms | <b>1993</b><br>3-4 working farms |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|

This long agricultural history explains why the 2026 survey repeatedly named Broadwell Farm, barns, grazing land, ridge and furrow, fields between buildings and views across farmland. Residents were not simply admiring scenery: they were responding to the visible structure of a farmed settlement. <sup>9</sup>

## Trades, shops, inns and the mill

Broadwell once supported a wider range of local work than it does today. A mason was recorded in 1591 and two tailors in 1608. Blacksmiths can be traced from 1650 to 1935, wheelwrights from around 1705 to around 1950, and later records include a slater and plasterer, corn dealer, haulier, baker, shoemaker, shops and a post office. A brick and tile kiln worked on Broadwell Hill in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

### The Fox, the Rock Tavern and the Wheatsheaf

Broadwell had two inns in 1849: The Fox and the Rock Tavern. The Rock Tavern existed by 1793 and may have been the premises later known as the Wheatsheaf. The Wheatsheaf closed between 1906 and 1919, leaving The Fox as the village's surviving public house. The HER confirms that the listed building called The Wheatsheaf was formerly an inn and has a late seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century core.<sup>1,2,3,5</sup>

The point in a village-wide history is not to make one former premises the centre of the story. It is to recover the network of places where people worked, traded, met and exchanged news. Names such as Old Smithy, Old Bakery, The Fox and The Wheatsheaf keep parts of that network visible.<sup>1,5</sup>

### The lost mill and sheepwash

A mill formed part of Evesham Abbey's estate in the twelfth century. In the early thirteenth century a fishpond was made and a new mill built over it. The water-mill was still recorded in 1539 and later passed to William Chadwell, but there is no certain reference to it working after the seventeenth century. In 1704 a house was described as formerly a water corn-mill. By 1868 no buildings remained on the site, although earthworks and pieces of masonry survived downstream from the ford.<sup>1,2</sup>

The HER also records a former sheepwash north-east of Millbrook. A survey in 2001-02 found that it had already been demolished. It is a small detail, but one that reconnects the water system with the practical life of a livestock-farming village.<sup>2</sup>

### From local work to outward travel

By 1953 two-fifths of employed residents worked outside Broadwell, and in 1960 buses collected workers travelling as far as Witney, Stratford-upon-Avon and Oxford. The 2026 survey describes a modern mixture of retired residents, commuters, self-employed people, remote workers and hybrid workers. The means have changed, but Broadwell's relationship with places beyond its boundary remains central to everyday life.<sup>1,9</sup>

#### Work has left a physical vocabulary

Farm, barn, smithy, bakery, mill, shop, post office, school, chapel, hall and inn are not only historical categories. They are names, buildings and routes still embedded in how Broadwell is understood.<sup>1,5</sup>

# The Green, the stream, lanes and views

The Green is the most obvious shared space in Broadwell, but its history is more complex than a single untouched common. By 1793 tracks and farm buildings divided the common land into upper, middle and lower greens, and the land was allotted among owners. Part of the former Green was added to the churchyard around 1921, and in 1952 the lower end was presented to the parish council and laid out as a recreation ground.<sup>1</sup>

It is often said locally that Broadwell has one of the largest village greens in the Cotswolds. A formal comparison has not yet been made, so the claim is best kept as local tradition. What does not need qualification is the Green’s scale within Broadwell and its importance as the place where water, roads, buildings, recreation and community life meet.<sup>5,10</sup>

## Routes shaped by water and inclosure

The road from Stow skirts the Green and continues towards Evenlode. The causeway to Evenlode was mentioned in 1587, and the river crossing was known as New Bridge in 1621 and Stock Bridge by 1793. An older road from the eastern corner of the Green forded the Mill Brook on its way towards the church. After inclosure, a road was set out around the west side of the Green and another opened from the church towards Donnington across the Fosse Way. Kennel Lane developed from one of the older field tracks.<sup>1</sup>

## Open space is part of the settlement

Broadwell’s open character is not created only by the main Green. It depends on churchyard, paddocks, gardens, orchards, farm courts, stream corridors, roadside verges, field edges and the sudden views that open between buildings. These spaces allow the church, manor, barns, cottages and lanes to be read as parts of a rural settlement rather than a continuous built frontage.<sup>1,4,9</sup>

*“The spaces between are as important as those between the surrounding countryside and the scale of the historic Cotswold stone buildings and walls.”<sup>9</sup>*

*Anonymous response to the 2026 Broadwell Community Survey*

### What should be mapped

Green and churchyard; springs, stream and ford; footpaths; open paddocks and orchards; historic field boundaries; ridge and furrow; farm groups; selected views.

### What still needs checking

The exact historic and present boundaries of the various greens and commons, ownership changes, and how those boundaries relate to present public space.<sup>1,5</sup>

### Character is relational

A change to one building, gap, route, watercourse or edge can alter how the wider village is read. The setting is not a backdrop to the historic buildings; it is part of their meaning.<sup>1,4,9</sup>

# Population, school, new houses and links with Stow

Broadwell's population was 239 in 1801 and rose to a nineteenth-century peak of 404 in 1871. It then fell to 294 in 1921 before rising again to more than 400 by 1960. These figures do not describe a static rural settlement: the number of people, the location of housing and the balance between local and outward work all changed.<sup>1</sup>

|                              |                              |                              |                                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>1801</b><br>239 residents | <b>1871</b><br>404 residents | <b>1921</b><br>294 residents | <b>1960</b><br>more than 400 residents |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|

## New farms, rows and houses

The nineteenth century added new forms and scales to the older village. Cownham and Sydenham Farms appeared on the outskirts. Fox's Row and Pimlico added short rows of cottages around the lower village. Broadwell Hill was built for Piers Thursby in 1879 in a Jacobean manner, while Fosseway House developed from a hunting lodge on land later transferred to Stow. These were not replicas of older farmhouses, but new expressions of status, work and domestic life.<sup>1,4,5</sup>

## The school

A Sunday school was recorded in 1790. By 1818 Broadwell had a girls' day school and a boys' Sunday school. A new schoolroom was built in Kennel Lane in 1851; by 1869 it was a National school with a certificated mistress teaching 23 boys and 31 girls in one room. The building was rebuilt in 1870 and enlarged for 113 children in 1894.<sup>1,5</sup>

Joan Johnson's account makes the statistics human. School attendance rose and fell with harvests, potato picking, weather, family work, funerals, marriages and Stow Fair. Such details reveal a village in which education was growing in importance but remained woven into the rhythms of farming and neighbouring market-town life.<sup>5</sup>

The Leigh/Thursby material adds complementary memories of Sunday school journeys to Adlestrop, school treats, carol singing, concerts and attendance shaped by seasonal work and village events. These recollections should be read as remembered practice rather than a complete school record, but they fit the documented picture of education embedded in agricultural and parish life.<sup>11</sup>

## Broadwell and Stow

Stow's markets and fairs were an economic advantage, but proximity also created tensions. Joan Johnson records disputes over Broadwell's springs and the watering of cattle, as well as the social pull of Stow Club Day and seasonal fairs. Broadwell was never isolated: its independence and identity developed alongside close practical dependence on nearby places.<sup>5</sup>

### Change did not begin in the twentieth century

New housing, new institutions, altered roads, commuting and stronger links beyond the parish have long been part of Broadwell's story. The question has repeatedly been how change fits the scale and structure of the place.<sup>1,5,9</sup>

# Utilities, housing, school and community life

The twentieth century changed the practical life of Broadwell as deeply as any earlier period. Electricity was authorised under an Act of 1928. At the end of the Second World War only a few houses used it, but by 1953 only two houses remained without supply. Until that same year, water was piped from the spring near the church; mains water then reached the village.<sup>1</sup>

New housing also altered the settlement. Scattered houses appeared on the outskirts between the wars. Between 1950 and 1960 the rural district council built nearly 30 houses near Kennel Lane, while about ten older cottages were demolished for new building. Broadwell’s history is therefore not one of simple preservation: the village has repeatedly accommodated change, sometimes with gain and sometimes with loss.<sup>1</sup>

|                                       |                                               |                                                |                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1928</b><br>Electricity authorised | <b>1939-45</b><br>Evacuees and wartime change | <b>1953</b><br>Mains water reaches the village | <b>1957</b><br>Present village hall opens                                                     |
| <b>1989</b><br>Village school closes  | <b>1993</b><br>Village Appraisal              | <b>2026</b><br>Community Survey                | <b>2026 onward</b><br>History, ecology and community evidence read together <sup>1,8,10</sup> |

## School, hall and shared life

The school’s twentieth-century history deserves a fuller oral account. In the 1950s older children began travelling elsewhere, staff numbers fell, and fewer than 50 children - including some from Donnington - attended in 1960. The school eventually closed in 1989. Memories of teachers, classrooms, journeys, games and annual events are now an important part of the village record.<sup>1,8,10</sup>

The present village hall opened beside the Green in 1957, replacing a wooden hut built by residents after the First World War. The 1993 appraisal records wartime evacuees, changing farm life, fêtes and local organisations. As shops, post office services and older forms of employment declined, social life did not simply disappear. It reorganised around the church, The Fox, the hall, the Green, paths, clubs and informal neighbourliness.<sup>1,8</sup>

## The village in remembered detail

The typescript preserves a vivid inventory of shared routines: Guy Fawkes bonfires by The Fox, May Day celebrations, Armistice dinners, church-choir carols, school treats, concerts and an earlier village hall raised by collective effort. These memories are selective and personal, but together they show how the Green, church, pub, school and hall worked as a social network rather than as isolated buildings.<sup>11</sup>

It also gives names to the service economy. Lizzie Cowley is recorded as delivering post in Broadwell and Donnington for 48 years before retiring in 1954; the typescript reproduces contemporary reports of the village presentation made to her. Her story is a small but powerful example of work that connected farms, cottages and neighbouring settlements long before digital communication.<sup>11</sup>

## Buildings adapted as work changed

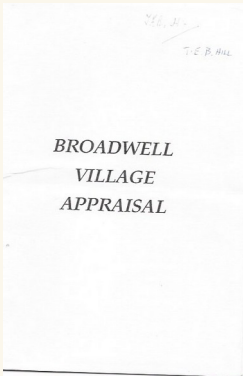
The decline in the number of working farms and village trades left barns, workshops, school and service buildings available for new uses. Conversion and adaptation are therefore part of Broadwell’s recent history. The strongest changes are those that retain the legibility of former uses and respect the spaces, routes and agricultural scale around them.<sup>1,5,9</sup>

### Continuity through adaptation

Broadwell is not a museum village. Its continuity has depended on people adapting buildings, creating new institutions and finding new ways to sustain community life.<sup>1,8,9</sup>



# Two surveys, one continuing village story



The 1993 appraisal, rediscovered in the village archive.

## The 1993 Village Appraisal

The appraisal was based on 98 household replies representing 236 villagers, probably around two-thirds of the population at the time.<sup>8</sup>

Its conclusions included opposition to further large-scale housing, concern about speeding and street parking, anxiety about losing the bus service, limited enthusiasm for more tourism, support for children's play space and a strong wish for consultation over the village's future.<sup>8</sup>

It also recorded affection for village life and countryside, a shrinking number of farms, the recent closure of the school and the importance of the hall, Green and local organisations.<sup>8</sup>

## What has endured

The 2026 survey is not directly comparable question by question, but the recurring themes are striking: love of countryside and village life, concern about the scale of development, car dependence, traffic and speeding, and the importance of community. The modern survey also gives much greater prominence to digital connectivity, drainage, surface water and flood risk.<sup>8,9</sup>

### Long-standing themes

Countryside, village scale, community, traffic, speeding, car dependence, housing and consultation.<sup>8,9</sup>

### Newer or stronger themes

Digital connections, remote and hybrid work, recent flood experience, modern infrastructure pressures and current planning classifications.<sup>9</sup>

## Read them as chapters...

The two surveys were designed differently and belong to different moments. Their value lies in showing both continuity and change: what Broadwell has long cared about, and what modern life has added to the village agenda.<sup>8,9</sup>

# From documentary record to lived memory

The formal sources give Broadwell a strong historical framework, but they cannot supply the sound of local speech, the detail of everyday routines, the names of fields used within families, the experience of attending the school, the arrival of electricity, memories of shops and farms, or what it felt like when the village changed. The Leigh/Thursby typescript demonstrates both the value and the difficulty of that material: some passages can be corroborated, while others survive only because someone chose to write down what older residents remembered.<sup>1,2,5,11</sup>

The 2026 survey contains a clear request to listen to people who were born and raised here and to value knowledge held by long-standing residents. The pronunciation “Bradall” is a perfect example: small, easily lost, and meaningful precisely because it is carried in speech rather than official records.<sup>9,10</sup>

## The Leigh/Thursby typescript

The document is best treated as a composite source. Roger Leigh's historical study overlaps substantially with the Victoria County History and later local histories. D. N. Thursby's later section preserves named residents, speech, customs, household stories and first-person recollection. Where those memories cannot be independently checked, this draft keeps them as attributed local testimony rather than silently converting them into fact.<sup>11</sup>

## An oral-history programme

| Theme                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Questions worth asking                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School and childhood                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Who taught there? What were the rooms, games, journeys and annual events? What changed before closure?                                                                                                                              |
| Farms and work                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Which farms, fields, families, trades and seasonal routines are remembered? How were buildings used?                                                                                                                                |
| War and utilities                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Who remembers evacuees, wartime life, electricity, mains water and changing transport?                                                                                                                                              |
| Shops and institutions                                                                                                                                                                                                 | What do people remember of the post office, shops, chapel, hall, clubs, fêtes and local publications?                                                                                                                               |
| Language and place-names                                                                                                                                                                                               | How were Broadwell, fields, lanes, houses and water features pronounced or named locally?                                                                                                                                           |
| Change and development                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Which changes strengthened the village, which caused loss, and what was learned from them?                                                                                                                                          |
| <div><b>How memories should be used</b><br/>Record who is speaking, when the interview took place and whether the account is first-hand, inherited or uncertain. Keep the speaker's own words wherever possible.</div> | <div><b>How the evidence should grow</b><br/>Add photographs, captions, maps, documents and cross-references as they emerge. Corrections should improve the shared record, not be treated as criticism of those who began it.</div> |

## History and ecology: connected but separate

This document explains the historical role of springs, streams, fields, hedges, orchards, trees and open ground. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal records habitat conditions, ecological opportunities and the potential for protected and notable species at four identified greenspaces. It is a site-specific snapshot rather than a whole-parish survey or Habitat Management Plan. Read together, the two documents show both how the landscape developed and what environmental value it carries today, without asking either document to do the other's job.<sup>12</sup>

**An invitation**  
Residents are warmly invited to add memories, photographs, maps, documents, corrections and names. A project contact and permissions process should be added before a public edition is circulated.

## What this draft is built from:

| Ref. | Source                                                        | Use in this draft                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Victoria County History                                       | "Parishes: Broadwell", A History of the County of Gloucester, Volume 6 (1965), pp. 49-59. Principal source for topography, manor, farming, trades, church, school and village development.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2    | Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record                   | Search reference HER6363079, including the area report and parish/village maps. Used for archaeology, listed buildings, monuments, cropmarks, the mill, sheepwash and recorded investigations.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 3    | Historic England / official listings                          | National Heritage List descriptions for St Paul's, the Manor House and other recorded buildings and monuments, as reproduced or referenced in the HER.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 4    | David Verey / Pevsner                                         | The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire, The Cotswolds, second edition. Used for concise architectural descriptions and the relationship between rubble buildings and the ashlar Manor House.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 5    | Joan Johnson                                                  | Broadwell: A Short History (privately published, Stow-on-the-Wold, 1999). Used for local narrative, social history, place-names, school life and village memory. This edition reproduces its map, historic St Paul's photograph and early twentieth-century Ford photograph. The publication credits in-text illustrations to Felicity A. Hill and photographs to Richard Drinkwater and David Hanks. |
| 6    | St Paul's church leaflet                                      | Undated leaflet describing the church, bale tombs and yew; records a Conservation Foundation certification of the yew at 1,300 years.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 7    | Ancient yew records                                           | Ancient Yew Group and Gloucestershire yew measurements, used for girth and the caution needed when estimating age.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 8    | Broadwell Village Appraisal                                   | Village archive copy, 1993. Household survey, conclusions and short historical context.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 9    | Broadwell Community Survey                                    | Anonymous responses, summary and detailed report, 2026. Used for present-day values, named places, continuity and pressure for change.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 10   | Local knowledge and oral history                              | Notes, pronunciations, recollections and information supplied by Broadwell residents. Used where clearly identified as local knowledge or living memory.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 11   | Roger Leigh / D. N. Thursby                                   | Notes on the History of Broadwell, unpublished and undated typescript. The preface attributes the historical study to Roger Leigh and the later 'Old Wives' Tales' to D. N. Thursby. Used for field-system interpretation, church and school memories, village customs and named twentieth-century residents; unsupported details remain attributed recollection.                                     |
| 12   | Broadwell Parish Greenspaces Preliminary Ecological Appraisal | Updated 26 August 2026. Professional habitat and protected-species appraisal for four identified village greenspaces; used to explain how the separate ecological evidence complements this historical account and as the source of the 2026 photograph of St Paul's and the churchyard yew.                                                                                                          |

## What would bring the public edition to life

- Panorama from Broadwell Hill and the principal approaches.
- St Paul's, the yew, churchyard monuments and spring setting.
- The Manor House, Broadwell Farm, major barns and farm courts.
- The Green, stream, ford or splash, Watery Lane and seasonal water.
- Open paddocks, orchards, ridge and furrow, hedges and field edges.
- The Fox, village hall, former school, chapel, smithy and bakery sites.
- Historic photographs of farms, shops, school, fêtes, floods and village groups.
- Historic maps: inclosure, tithe, early Ordnance Survey and present aerial view.
- Repeat photographs from old viewpoints, with date and precise location.
- A permissions and credits register for every image, map and oral-history extract.

### The purpose of the work

Before deciding what Broadwell should become, it helps to understand what Broadwell is: a living community whose history is held in water, land, buildings, work, memory and the relationships between them. <sup>1,5,8,9,10</sup>

With thanks to Joan Johnson, Roger Leigh, D. N. Thursby and the residents who have shared records, survey responses, comments and local knowledge. The illustrations reproduced in this review draft are credited to their source publications. Any additional material added for the public edition should continue to be recorded in the image and permissions register.